

BEFORE THE  
POSTAL REGULATORY COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20268-0001

RETAIL ACCESS OPTIMIZATION INITIATIVE, 2011

Docket No. N2011-1

**RESPONSES OF UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE WITNESS BOLDT  
TO NAPUS INTERROGATORIES  
NAPUS/USPS-T1-32 THROUGH T1-34**

The United States Postal Service hereby provides the responses of witness James Boldt to the above-listed interrogatories of the National Association of Postmasters of the United States dated August 12, 2011. Each interrogatory is stated verbatim and followed by the response. Interrogatories NAPUS/USPS-T1-23 through 31 and T1-35 through 41 have been redirected to the Postal Service for response.

Respectfully submitted,

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

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**RESPONSE OF UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE WITNESS BOLDT  
TO NAPUS INTERROGATORY**

**NAPUS/USPS-T1-32**

Please refer to USPS-T-1, page 6, Table 6 and page 7, Table 2. Does the data in Table 2 apply solely to communities served by the POS locations referenced in Table 1. If not, please apply the data to the POS locations.

**RESPONSE**

If the question is referring to Tables 1 and 2 on pages 6 and 7, respectively, the answer is affirmative.

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**NAPUS/USPS-T-1-33**

Within the communities served by the 2,800 candidate post offices, please indicate the percentage of postal customers who used alternative venues for postal transactions for the most recent five years, if available.

**RESPONSE**

In the absence of a business need to do so, no such study has been conducted that would yield such data.

## **RESPONSE OF UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE WITNESS BOLDT TO NAPUS INTERROGATORY**

### **NAPUS/USPS-T1-34**

Please refer to USPS-T-1, page 18, lines 2 through 8.

- (a) Please explain the process for filling a vacant Postmaster position, and enumerate the circumstances under which a Postmaster vacancy would not be filled.
- (b) Please identify the post offices that are currently suspended for which there is a Postmaster vacancy.
- (c) Is a post office considered vacant if an officer-in-charge is managing the facility?
- (d) Please indicate the specific criteria and threshold for concluding that there is "insufficient customer demand."
- (e) Please indicate the specific criteria and threshold for concluding that there is available "alternative access channels."
- (f) Please indicate who determines that there exists "alternative access channels."

### **RESPONSE**

- (a) A vacant Postmaster position is filled by following the Personnel Selection Process through eCareers. Several factors can lead to a Postmaster position not being filled, starting with general awareness that the Postal Service is in the process of realigning its workforce to match declining mail volume, customer visits, and retail transactions. Since it is easier on employees and for the Postal Service to eliminate a position that is not occupied by an incumbent, delaying the filling of positions is a strategy that has been used widely in the Postal Service. Other factors that can delay the filling of postmaster vacancies include whether (1) the operations of an office have been suspended, (2) it has a low workload or demand, and (3) the physical presence of nearby alternate (and brick/mortar) access options for customers.

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**RESPONSE to NAPUS/USPS-T1-34 (continued)**

- (b) None of the approximately 2800 low earned workload category Post Offices under review as part of the RAO Initiative was suspended at the time of the filing of the request.
- (c) Neither a Postmaster position nor a Post Office is vacant simply because the facility is being managed by an Officer-in-Charge. The OIC could be managing the office because the Postmaster is detailed, on leave, or in training.
- (d) Insufficient customer demand is demonstrated through the office not having sufficient earned workhours; it often coexists with insufficient workload (decline in mail volume, customer visits, and retail transactions).
- (e) In the context of a particular discontinuance study, availability of “alternative access channels” is evaluated by examining the proximity of nearby postal retail locations (brick and mortar), as well as CPUs, VPOs and Community Post Offices, private retail stores that sell stamps through consignment, Approved Shippers, and retail partner alliances such as those with local Office Depot stores. Also sometimes taken into account is access by postal customers who can order stamps by mail or by phone, tools to which there is virtually universal access, or the increasing reach of broadband access.
- (f) This is one of many factors evaluated by local postal management in the context of a given discontinuance study.